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EDITOR : D. N. Majumdar
FOREIGN EDITOR : C. von. Furer-Haimendorf
ASSOCIATE EDITOR : S. C. Dube

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[Title page]

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THE USE OF THREAD-CROSSES IN LEPCHA LAMAIST CEREMONIES

R. VON NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ AND GEOFFREY GORER

The pre-Buddhist Bön[1] faith of Tibet, remnants of which are still to be found in that country, employs in its ceremonies complicated, mast-like structures, consisting of sticks, thread and tufts of wool. These structures, technically known as "thread-crosses",[2] are called Dö (spelled *mDos*), Domo (*mDos mo*) or Ye (*Yas*) by the Tibetans. After its introduction into Tibet, the Buddhist religion incorporated into its system many of the aboriginal deities and numerous magical ceremonies of the Bön; it also took over the use of thread-crosses.

Although many western travellers observed and reported the use of these curious structures in various parts of Tibet, no comprehensive report on the purpose of the thread-crosses and the complicated rituals, accompanying their construction seems to have been published. Some information can, however, be gathered from various books on Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism.[3] Summarizing our present knowledge we may say that thread-crosses are used in Tibetan religious ceremonies for the following purposes:

(1) As contraptions for catching demons. When applied in this way, they are put in front of objects, which they are supposed to protect (monasteries, villages, etc.) the idea being that approaching malignant spirits get caught in the net of the thread-cross, like flies in a spider's web. It is therefore regarded as necessary to renew the contraption and to destroy the old thread-cross when the *mDos* has served its purpose for some time and become "saturated" with the powers of evil; this is usually done by pulling it down and burning it ceremonially. It is interesting to note that parts of the destroyed thread-cross are sometimes suspended above the doors of houses, fastened on the ceiling or placed near the image shrine as "charms for good luck",

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in spite of the fact that the *mDos* is in this case regarded as an abode of evil forces.[4] Indeed, after the destruction of the structure a fight regularly ensues between laymen attending the ceremony, everyone trying to secure a piece of the *mDos*.[5]

(2) The *mDos* is sometimes regarded as a "house" or "seat" for gods or spirits and is used for this purpose in some ceremonies, the supernaturals being invited to descend upon the thread-cross. In some cases, however, malignant demons, especially those causing illnesses, are compelled by the exorcist to leave the body of their victim and to enter a *mDos*, which is afterwards carried away to some lonely spot and there abandoned or destroyed.

(3) For counteracting the influence of evil spirits or for appeasing their anger, special thread-crosses are erected, e.g. as described by Waddell in the ceremonies "baring the earth and sky demons".[6]

(4) A *mDos* appears to be sometimes used instead of the dough effigy which plays an important part in Tibetan religious dances. Thus a huge *mDos* consisting of three different parts and bearing the symbols of sun, moon and the wish-granting jewel on its top, is used at the religious dance of the *Karma pa* monastery *Pho brang dgon pa rdo brtsug* in Darjeeling.

Various names are given by the Tibetans to certain parts of the thread-cross. The stick which forms the central vertical axis, is called *Srog shing*, "life tree", a spider-web like part of a huge *mDos*, constructed with the help of four sticks, is called *dPal dbyer*, etc.

According to the purpose they serve or the relation they have to certain supernaturals, the thread-crosses bear various names, many of which refer to groups of gods or demons of the aboriginal Bŏn faith.[7] Thus one kind of *mDos*, consisting mostly of red thread, corresponds to the group of the *bTsan*[8] demons, which are thought of as having red bodies; other thread-crosses are called "The secret *mDos* of *Pe-dkar*[9] (*Pe dkar gsang mDos*), "The planet *mDos*" (*gZa mDos*), etc. When constructing the thread-crosses,

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when constructing the thread-crosses)
strict rules concerning their colour, the way of arranging and knotting the coloured strings, etc. must be observed according to orthodox traditions. While the work is progressing, prayers and magic syllables (*dhāranis*) are chanted and the officiating priest breathes from time to time upon the structure.

Besides the sticks, coloured thread and tufts of wool, used for the construction of thread-crosses, several other objects are often required in these ceremonies. They are: various skulls of animals—thus at the ceremony of "closing the door of the sky demons" the *mDos* is fastened to a dog's skull, while in the rite "closing the door against the earth demons" a ram's skull is used instead—furthermore flat wooden sticks, covered with rough drawings of various emblems and images. These sticks, which are called Tamshing (*Khram shing*)[10] by the Tibetans, were originally used by Bŏn priests as important objects in their ceremonies. Other related instruments are sticks with tufts of white or coloured wool on top and in the middle, called Yetag (*Yas btags*), cones made of dough—termed Torma,[11] *gTor ma*—and images made of butter with the help of wooden moulds (*Zan par*). When preparing a base for the *mDos*, earth, straw and grass are used to build a series of square platforms, usually four in number, superimposed one on top of the other in decreasing size. On top of this the principal thread-cross is usually planted. This arrangement and some of the ideas connected with the various parts of the *mDos* itself show a certain parallel to the ideas connected with the symbolism of the Buddhist Chŏtens[12] (*mChhod rten*, Skr. Stūpa).

So far little authentic information on the original use of the *mDos* has been obtained from Tibetan sources; additional evidence on this subject can be, however, obtained from some neighbours of the Tibetans. It is well known to-day, that many of the neighbouring tribes, especially in the south and south-east professed or even still profess a religion, which seems to be very similar to the Tibetan Bŏn faith. The most comprehensive evidence on this question

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is to be found in the religious beliefs and customs of the ¹Na—²khi tribe, who have been previously confused with the Mo-so. The ¹Na—²khi, a branch of the ancient Ch'iang live to-day in Southwest China around Likiang, their former capital. This tribe was carefully studied by Dr. J. F. Rock over a period of more than twenty years. Dr. Rock translated the greatest part of the comprehensive literature of the ¹Na—²khi and analyzed their religious ceremonies; thereby he showed that this tribe preserved in its beliefs and customs a very high percentage of old Bon traditions. The priests of the ¹Na—²khi, called ²Dto—¹mba, employ thread-crosses (*¹Na-²k' wai* in ¹Na-²khi) in a number of ceremonies. As in Tibet, these *¹Na-²k'wai* are regarded as "seats" for either gods or demons. But we also find other beliefs. Thus it is reported in ¹Na-²khi books, that ²Dto-¹mba ³Shi-²lo (who is identical with the Tibetan *gShen rabs mi bo*, the founder of the Bon religion), was transformed at the moment of his death into a thread-cross, while on the so-called *Ha"-shi-pi*, which is used at funeral ceremonies, ²Dto-¹mba ³Shi-¹lo's horse is figured carrying a *¹Na-²k'-wai*.[14] Another belief is that the ²Ba"¹d'a, the warriors who accompany some of the ¹Na-²khi deities, originated from thread-crosses in the intermediary space between heaven and earth.[15] We should finally notice that drawings of *¹Na-²k'-wai* are often found in the pictographic script of the ¹Na-²khi.

To Dr. Rock we are also indebted for the information that thread-crosses are used by the ancient Hapa sect, members of which are still living in the territory of Muli (*Mi li*) and Yung-ning in Southwest China. The Hapa erect elaborate thread-crosses for averting hail.[16] These structures, called *Nyata* by the Hapa sorcerers, are renewed after three or four years. As Dr. Rock obtained a Hapa manuscript,[17] written in Tibetan and dealing with the ceremony of erecting a thread-cross for the demon-king Pe-dkar we can expect to receive valuable information on this subject later on.

Unfortunately, less is known about the use of thread-crosses among other near or more distant neighbours of the

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Tibetans. They are reported to be used by the Mongols who call them *ónggc*, "colour", makhabut "body" or torgaguli "obstacle", the last name certainly refering to their ritual purpose. It seems, however, that their use has become very rare in Mongolia in more recent times.[18]

Other reports show that thread-crosses are used by the Kachin and some of the Naga tribes, especially in death ceremonies, and for averting or destroying evil.[19]

Further to the southwest we find, that thread-crosses are extensively used in the religious ceremonies of the Lepchas of Sikkim. The Lepchas, who adhere today to Tibetan Buddhism, have preserved some practices of their original religion, which—after the name of its priests—is called the Mun-religion.[20] Consequently there is a mixture of rites and beliefs of both religions and it is very difficult to state with certainty, which of the rites and religious ideas originated from the Mun or from Lamaism. This situation is made still more complicated by the fact that the Buddhist teachings introduced into Sikkim were those of the unreformed *rNying ma pa*, the "Old Sect", which preserved in its religious practices many customs originating from the Bön, which, however, have scarcely been studied up to now.

How closely the Mun religion and Lamaism became associated among the Lepchas is shown by the fact that many of the Lepcha ceremonies are concurrently performed by Mun priests and lamas.

Thread-crosses are called in Lepcha *deu*—corresponding to the Tibetan *Do, mDos*—or *Yeu*, an equivalent of the Tibetan *Ye, Yas*. As to the meaning of the thread-cross, it is generally regarded by Lepcha lamas as a "seat", "house" or "place" for supernatural beings. The tufts of wool, which are fastened to the thread-cross or are placed on top of bamboo sticks planted near the structure are supposed to represent clouds, surrounding the "palace".

The remainder of this paper consists of details of Lepcha ceremonies in which thread-crosses are used. Some of these ceremonies have already been described and only short accounts will be given of these; in most cases there

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are some new details on the composition or use of the thread-cross.

1. THE CHERIM CEREMONY

This ceremony, consisting of three parts, takes place twice a year in honour of the mountain god of Kanchenjunga (*Gangs chan mdzod Inga*, "The five glacier treasuries"), as well as for appeasing evil spirits, to protect the crops from hail and men from diseases. It is partly performed by Mun, partly by lamas, who officiate during the last third of the rite. As a description of the ceremony itself has already been given previously,[21] we shall mention here only the third part of the rite and the form of the thread-cross used herein.

This part is performed by the lamas who direct their sacrifice to all the gods and demons; the main sacrifice is made to the mountain god Kanchenjunga[22] and the "gods of the plains". The essential part of the rite consists in erecting a *deu*, the construction of which starts some four hours earlier. The *deu* consists of nine storeys, made of blue, red, yellow and white thread.[23] This thread-cross is called *mamoo yam deu*.

The Lepcha lamas explain that this structure is erected to appease the malignant ghost of a Tibetan king, who was called Dayom Panoh, "king Dayom". During his lifetime enemies destroyed his palace and when he died his ghost started roaming around and harming people out of revenge. The *deu* should provide a nine-storied palace and entice him to return to Tibet.

Besides the *deu*, an image of a female supernatural being, called *mamoo*, is erected. The effigy of the *mamoo* is made out of ground millet and buckwheat dough. The *mamoo* is represented with outstretched hands, riding a tiger. On her breast she is wearing a necklace, made of butter, while the lower part of her body is covered by a garment, indicated by scratches in the dough. The supernatural being has snakes instead of hair and wears a five-lobed crown, apparently similar to that worn by Tantric lamas.

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This image is placed upon a base, formed by covering a bamboo stretcher with earth and braken and superimposing upon it squares of turf, each smaller than the other, with the grass facing down. The nine-storied *deu* is planted into the topmost turf immediately behind the figure. On the lower steps of the base, a great number of cones made of dough and covered with pieces of coloured cotton is placed. These cones, called *diget*, represent the servants of the *mamoo*. On the four corners of the second layer, four *yeu* are planted: in front in the right-hand corner blue, on the left white, in the rear left yellow and in the rear right red. In the topmost layer as well as into the second one, several flat wooden sticks, called *Tamsing* by the Lepchas, and small sticks bearing tufts of wool—termed *pong* or *bamgyal*—are planted. On the lowest step, a wall called *po ryum*, with a gap in front, is erected around the last turf square. Opposite this gap, inside the enclosure, four small vessels containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. On the right and left outside of the wall, crossed arrows and spindles are stuck into the base, the arrows being put on the right, the spindles on the left, when facing the structure. According to the explanation given by the priests, the arrows represent the male element, while the spindles stand for the female. Finally, various flowers are put around the lowest base.

The ceremony is continued by offering food and various objects to the *mamoo* and other spirits and then by chanting of prayers. Towards the evening, when the ceremony comes to an end, the *deu* with the dough images is carried across three streams and then thrown away. If the images are eaten by animals within three days, it is regarded as a sign that the gods were pleased with the offerings made to them; if the effigies remain untouched, bad fortune may be expected in the near future.

There are several similarities to be found between this Lepcha rite and old Tibetan religious customs and thoughts. The name of the special thread-cross, *mamoo yam deu*, is derived from Tibetan. Indeed, one of the Tibetan thread-

crosses is called *ma mo mDos*, "The thread-cross of the *ma mo*" and is dedicated to supernatural beings called *ma mo*. This thread-cross seems to be an especially important form, as there is a special Tibetan book on its construction. The *ma mo's* are represented by Tibetan artists as fierce and terrifying female demons; they are frequently met with in Tibetan iconography, where twelve Great *ma mo's* (*ma mo chhen mo*) accompany Yama (*gShin rje*) as his messengers.[24] Since the *mamoo* of the Lepchas is also a female deity and as she has snakes instead of hair and is riding a yawning tiger, she should be regarded as a malignant spirit, most probably belonging or at least related to the *ma mo* group of the Tibetans.

The second syllable in the name of the thread-cross *yam*—seems to correspond to the Tibetan honorific expression for mother, *yum*. This Tibetan word is frequently used in the names of lamaist goddesses and particularly denotes the female consorts or "energies" of Tantric gods. As already mentioned, the word *Deu* corresponds to the Tibetan word *mDos*.

It is interesting to note that this thread-cross is nine-storied, as the number nine is very frequently used in the Bŏn religion, where many of the deities are depicted as nine headed, are placed into groups of nine, etc.[25] The colour of the thread used for constructing the big *Deu*[26] and especially the colour of the four smaller thread-crosses which are planted in the four corners of the topmost square is nearly identical with the colours attributed to the four main quarters of the world by lamaist traditions: East white (or brown), South yellow (blue), West blue-green (red) and North black (yellow).

As for the story of the Tibetan king Dayom it was not possible to find a parallel in Tibetan mythology. But it may be mentioned, that in an old Tibetan record recently made available in a translation by Prof. Tucci, it is said that the king of the *bDud* demons, called *Mi byams pa khrag po*, "The merciless with the bloody face", was living in a black castle with nine storeys or pinacles.[27]

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It has already been mentioned that some of the symbolism of the Tibetan thread-crosses corresponds to that of the Buddhist Chotens.[1] In the present case the four steps, formed by the bamboo-bracken fern base and the three squares of turf, correspond to the four steps of a Choten. The Lepcha name for these steps, *bangrim*, is identical with the respective Tibetan expression, *bang rim*.

Several of the other implements used in this ceremony are also well known from ancient Tibetan rites. Thus the wooden slabs, which are planted into the turf on the side of the main effigy and which are called *tamsing* by the Lepchas, are identical with the Tibetan *khram shing*, already mentioned. As for the *pong* or *bamgyal*—the former word appears to originate from Lepcha, while the latter was derived from Bŏn terminology—the sticks carrying tufts of wool, we know that wool was used frequently by Bŏn priests. Thus those *bonpos*, who belonged to a sect called *sNang gshen*, had tufts of wool on their foreheads, while those of the *hPhrul gshen*, sect used coloured thread of wool as their emblem. Adherents of the last mentioned sect are reported as having been especially efficient in the construction of *mDos* and *Yas*.[28]

We find a parallel for the connection between arrows and thread-crosses in a recently published *thang-ka* (painted scroll) of the Mongolian war god. On the lower part of this picture there is a hand, consisting of alternating thread-crosses and arrows.[29] Another similarity is perhaps the use of flowers, as a group of "Bŏn flowers" is mentioned in Bŏn scriptures. Finally, the ritual throwing away of the effigies also occurs in an important ancient ceremonies of Bŏn origin, called *lTo* or *gTo*, in which an effigy, regarded as a scape-goat, (*glud*[30]) is thrown away.

2. CEREMONY FOR KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS

At the beginning of the rite a basket is filled with earth and on top of it three concentric, decreasing, square turfs are placed. The basket, arranged in this way, is called

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 67. — Ed.]

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rum by the Lepchas. In the centre of the topmost base a dough image is placed together with a big white *deu*. The image is said to represent the spirit "King Gebu". He is accompanied by four lesser supernatural beings and one minister. All six images are made of rice dough. On the four corners of the square, four Yeu are placed, two white in front, a red and a yellow one in the rear. To each of these four *yeu* two *tamsing* and two *pong* are added, together with a strip imprinted with nine birds. On the step below, nine cones are placed, representing four ministers and five servants. Again, a band with representations of nine land animals is added. On the third storey, a great number of small images, representing male and female spirits, is placed. Into the lowest storey, eight arrows and eight spindles are planted and finally the whole structure is surrounded by various flowers. Later five cups, filled with Lepcha beer, tea and some bitter tasting liquid, are placed in front and several other implements, among them another image made of rice and with butter ornaments, are laid near the main *deu*. After burning incense, the officiating priests pray to the gods, to spare the population from illness.

As in the first rite, the number nine plays an important part and we find here again the various objects, which were said to be originally used in the ceremonies of the Bonpos.

3. SACRIFICE TO THE HAIL-DEMON DEBRONG PANOH

Debrong Panoh, "King Debrong", is a hail and thunder supernatural being who must be propitiated to prevent hail from ruining the crops. He is pictured as having nine faces, eighteen hands and a thousand eyes. His ritual is similar to that of Gebu Panoh. First a basket, with straw or dry leaves on the bottom, is filled with earth and afterwards again three concentric squares of turf are put on top. In the centre of the topmost square a dough image of Debrong Panoh is placed. This effigy, however, in contrast to the verbal description, has only one head and two hands. It holds a bow and a rope—perhaps the Tibetan

[See cat. 116, p. 72. - Analyst]

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ritual snare, *Zhags pa*—in the left hand and an umbrella as well as an arrow in the right. The image of Debrong Panoh is accompanied by four effigies, representing his four ministers, which are placed in the four corners of the top square. On the second, third and fourth stage stand images of servants and lesser male and female supernatural beings; in front of the altar five cups containing milk, tea and strained Lepcha beer are placed. Finally, all sorts of grain are thrown into the basket and small twigs of various useful fruit trees are set around it. When the first part of the ceremony is finished, two images of Debrong Panoh's parents are made and set on two wooden plates. The image of Debrong Panoh's father is called *chien lut*, that of his mother *looh lut*. Then three pots, filled with tea, milk and strained beer, are put in front of each image and afterwards a white *yeu*, together with two *tamsing* and *pong* is set on the table of Debrong Panoh's father. Likewise, a white *yeu*, again with two *tamsing* and two *pong* is placed upon the tray of the *looh lut*. Then a multi-coloured *deu* is placed on the image of Debrong Panoh itself, as well as four smaller thread-crosses in the four corners of the topmost square. The two *yeu*, which are set in front, are both white, those behind red and blue. Again, each *yeu* is accompanied by two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Now the basket, containing the main image, is put upon a low table in front of the main structure, while the wooden plates with the images of Debrong Panoh's parents are placed to its right and left sides. Two pots filled with water are added—"for the gods to wash their hands and faces"—and two containers full of rice and again a cup filled with water—"for the gods to drink"—and then some strained Lepcha beer, cooked meat and rice are mixed together in a vessel by the officiating lama. Afterwards, while prayers are chanted to the accompaniment of music of the temple orchestra, offerings of rice and water are thrown out to the gods and finally a path, leading from the basket to the door, is made with powder. When this is finished, the central *deu* is removed from the basket and

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carried out, while the basket and the two wooden plates are dragged along the path to the door. Once in the open, the basket is put in a tree, the *Chien lut* carried away to some other place and the image of Debrong Panoh's mother is thrown into the water-fall of a stream.

This rite contains some of the Bŏn elements mentioned before; further more this thunder and hail demon strongly resembles the appearance of gods as described by the Bonpos. Like many of the Bŏn deities, it is the personification of a natural phenomenon, depicted in the usual Bonpo manner, with nine faces and eighteen hands.

(5) For exorcising an evil spirit, who is causing an illness, several books must be chanted by a lama and two *deu*, called in Lepcha *chemen gedo* and *lumoo gedo* set upon a path. These Lepcha expressions are derived from the Tibetan terms *mTsho sman rgyal mdos* and *kLu mo rgyal mdos*, which are applied for two different kinds of thread-crosses, dedicated to certain groups of Nagas (*kLu*).

(6) While curing the illness, which had befallen a child, a horoscope was cast by a lama and it was decided that besides other rites a red thread-cross, called Tsen Deu, should be constructed. This *deu* is doubtlessly identical with a red *mDos* of the Tibetans, the *bTsan mdos* (pronounced *Tsen do*), which is constructed for averting the evil influence of the red *bTsan* demons.[31]

4. CEREMONY, PERFORMED BY LAMAS AND MUN FOR AVERTING AN ILLNESS

After a Mun has sacrificed an ox, some lamas erect a *torma* and sprinkle consecrated water and then make a tortoise, called *robe* in Lepcha—which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rube, Rus sbal*—which is drawn with its belly upward in powdered rice on a large mat. Afterwards, a square with various numbers, called *Miwua* (in Tibetan *sMe ba*)[32], is inscribed upon the body of the tortoise, in the following way:

4	9	6
3	5	1
8	2	7

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On the junction of 5 and 2, a plate is placed, containing an image of the invalid dressed with parts of his clothes. This effigy is surrounded by cones, representing years, and twisted pieces of dough which are waved over the invalid for exorcising the evil influence.[33] The effigy is surmounted by a *yeu* made of black, red, yellow and white thread and on both sides of the thread-cross some *tamsing* and *pong* are placed. Then various objects are laid upon each field of the magic diagram : Leaves of a tree called *gevo kanoh*, twisted pieces of dough, several triangular tormas surmounted by *yeu*—one of them in blue, the others white—a phallus-shaped cone tipped with butter,[34] and a bamboo holder containing water and surmounted by a flag, called Tarchoh. In the central square is placed a heap of bones consisting of six skulls of dogs and goats and two breastbones of sheep. After chanting prayers, burning incense and presenting offerings to the spirits, butter lamps are lit and a bow and a rope made of yak hair are brought into the room. This rope, which is called *sanong takpo* (it may be mentioned, that *Thag pa*, is the expression for rope in Tibetan) is reported to be used only in this ceremony.

Finally, a basket is taken by a friend of the family and held outside the house in front of the door. When the tray bearing the image of the invalid is incensed and the officiating priest addresses himself to the spirits telling them that they receive a substitute for the sick person, whom they should therefore release from their influence. At this moment, the invalid's father enters the room wearing a black cloth upon his shoulders and steps upon the central square of the tortoise. A stick is handed over to him, which he rests against his right big toe, while a helper pushes the heap of skulls previously placed upon this square, against his heels. Then the yak hair rope is drawn over the father's head, starting from his back, and placed against his ankles, while the tray containing the image of the sick person is lifted over his head and put into a basket, filled with leaves and grain. The father is then given a drink of water, which he spits into the basket. The contents of this are moved to.

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a bigger container. The father now steps from one square of the drawing to the other; his black cloth is removed when reaching square 7, while a black *yeu*, which was placed upon this square, is replaced by a white one. Then, after exchanging his stick for the bow, he proceeds to square 4, where he stops for a while, sprinkling Lepcha beer over the sick person.

In the last part of the ceremony, twisted pieces of dough are waved over the invalid as well as over those standing nearby, while prayers are chanted by the officiating priest. After making a path of ground rice towards the door, the image of the invalid is carried out together with all the other offerings and laid into the basket which is held ready outside the house. Immediately, the carriers have passed the entrance, the door is shut on them. Finally, the basket with its contents is taken to a river and thrown into the water while in the house of the sick the chanting of prayers is continued.

The ritual here described is again identical in its general outline with the *lTo* ceremonies. Many objects are used, which we identified as being important implements of the Bo'n priests: however, there are also some new elements. Thus the drawing of a tortoise bearing a magic diagram upon its belly often occurs in Tibetan representations, especially on objects used in astrology. In this connection it should be mentioned that among a group of minor Tibetan deities called *Sa bdag*,[35] "earth owners" a cosmic tortoise named *gSer gyi rus sbal*,[36] "the golden tortoise" is mentioned and that other *Sa bdag* are depicted riding tortoises. The Lepchas too regard the tortoise as a cosmic creature; their lamas explain, that the *robe* is living in a subterranean sea and is kept down by the mountain Kanchenjunga, which rests upon its centre.

The peculiar flag, which is placed on top of the bamboo container, is also found upon Tibetan objects, used in rituals performed for the *Sa bdag*. Its Lepcha name—*tarchoh*—corresponds to the Tibetan *Dar lchog*, pronounced *Darcho*.

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6. THE GYAPCHI KLON CEREMONY

This complicated ceremony is carried out concurrently by lamas and Mun priests in order to free a sick person from the evil influence of certain spirits, the presence of which was recognized by divination. As this rite has already been described elsewhere,[37] only the image used and the various thread-crosses will be described.

During this ceremony, five images are made of buck-wheat dough and placed in front of an altar-like structure. Four of the effigies, said to represent male spirits, are depicted alike, that is standing, with raised hands; some scratches in the dough indicate that they are wearing a garment. The names of these four supernatural beings are Chyong moong, Deut moong, Lho moong and Sher moong. Their respective colours, rendered in the same order, are green, red, yellow and white. The fifth image is that of Mamoo moong, a female supernatural being whom we encountered previously. Her image is black and she is portrayed with legs apart, the sexual organs greatly exaggerated. Behind each of the images, a *yeu* of the respective colour is planted, together with two *tamsing* and two sticks with tufts of wool.

Another image, used in this rite, is called the "house owner". It is surrounded by small butter discs displaying images, impressed with wooden printing blocks (the Tibetan *Zan par*). Some of these depict the supernatural beings who preside over the cycle of twelve years.[38] The image of the "house owner" is connected with one *yeu*, two *tamsing* and two *pong*. The thread-cross used in this case is multi-coloured.

7. RITUAL, PERFORMED BY A LAMA TO APPEASE THE FEVER DEVIL DEUT-MOONG

After reading prayers, the lama, using bamboo sticks and blue thread, constructs a thread-cross, which is called *moong-ka deu bitomu*. After placing various sorts of grain, leaves, some fried rice and bread into the *deu*, he makes

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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a small image, which is afterwards connected with the thread-cross. Then the whole structure is offered to Deut-moong and finally somebody, who was designated by the lama, has to take this offering to a place in the forest where it is left to be eaten by animals. This ritual also corresponds to the ancient Tibetan *lTo* rites previously mentioned.[171] In this connection it is interesting to note, that also in Tibet leaves or pieces of paper are placed in the thread-cross, usually in such a manner as to form the main features of a face. Occasionally a ceremonial scarf (*Kha btags*) is draped over the *mDos*.

8. RITE FOR AVERTING INFANTILE DIARHOEA

If several children die of infantile diarhoea, it is assumed that their death was caused by a malignant spirit, called Sande moong. The Lepchas know two ceremonies for appeasing his anger. For the first a black dog is made with a rider on its back and two *yeu*, a black and a white one are placed upon the dog's head, while a red thread-cross is planted behind the rider.

The second ceremony has already been described elsewhere.[39] In this ceremony a life-sized cat with a very long tail is made out of dough. A rider, sitting upon a horse's saddle is placed on its back and four images of men are put in front of and behind the cat. The animal is led by strands of coloured thread, wound around its neck and held by the rider and the images in front. The rider carries a red thread-cross; on the left-front side of the tray a white *Yue* is placed, on the right front a black one, on the right hand rear a white and on the rear left a yellow. To each *Yeu* a *Tamsing* with wool of the same colour as the thread-cross is added.

9. EXORCISM, CALLED DEUT SHAGU KYOB

For curing a person who has fallen ill through the influence of an evil spirit called Hlamen Djeme Pum, a

[39] [See cat. 116, p. 78. - Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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ceremony—which again corresponds to the Tibetan *ITo* rites—is performed.[1] An effigy is offered as substitute for the sick man or woman and afterwards carried far away from the house, in which the invalid lives. During this ceremony, also various thread-crosses are used. The name of this exorcism is nearly identical with the name of a Tibetan ceremony, called Dushel-gugyur (*bDud zhal dgu hsgyur*), "transfering the nine-faced *bDud-* demon". A treatise, composed by the well-known Indo-Tibetan mystic Padmasambhava, describing the performance of this ceremony, is reported to exist in Tibet.

10. KEEPING AWAY ILLNESS AND DEATH FROM A HOUSE

When divination has revealed that a household is in danger of being attacked by spirits of illness and death, a ceremony called Nambo Sagor must be held by the lamas. First a dog's skull is hung over the door by means of a rope, to keep away all diseases which come over the ground. Then a pig's skull is buried under the fire-place, to keep away the diseases above it. While this is done, other lamas chant from books; rice and sacred water are sprinkled and a *torma* as well as a *yeu* are made. This ceremony shows a similarity to the Tibetan rites described by Waddell which are performed to protect a house from the influence of the *Sa bdag*.

11. CURING AN ILLNESS BY MEANS OF THE GO SUM RITE

This is a complicated ceremony, concurrently performed by lamas and Mun priests, during which a hemaphrodite image with three heads is erected. This effigy has a distinctly Tibetan name: it is called Nagpo Gosum (in Tibetan spelling *Nag po mgo gsum*), "the black three-headed one". It has two hands and its three heads seen from left to right, are those of a blue pig, red ox and yellow tiger. Behind the image, three *Yeu* of the same colour as the respective heads, are planted, and two *tamsing* are

[1] [see cat 116, p. 78. – Analyst]

placed behind the two upraised arms. A cloth, in its shape similar to that worn by dancers in Tibetan religious dances, is hung upon its shoulders. As a comprehensive description of further details of this image is available elsewhere[40] we would merely draw notice to the detail that the navel of the effigy is formed by a tortoise with a magic diagram upon its belly. This tortoise was described when speaking about the sacrifice to the hail demon Debrong Panoh. This rite also corresponds to the Tibetan *lTo* ceremonies and is regarded by the Tibetans as being purely of Bonpo origin.

12. KILLING THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT AROT MOONG, WHICH CAUSES VIOLENT DEATH

For this ceremony, a big horse and four smaller ones, all carrying riders on their back are made of millet dough, coloured red. Behind each rider, a red *yeu* together with *pong* sticks is planted and the smaller images are then placed into the four corners of a wooden plate, while the bigger image is put into the centre. In front of this a black figure of the *mamoo* is placed, together with an inflated animal's bladder. Other objects used in this ceremony are symbols of the 12 years cycle, four pots containing scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison and water from five rivers and various crops in leaf plates, prickly plants, and again arrows and spindles. The rest of this ceremony is described in *Himalayan Village* (p. 352). The four red images of riders seem to represent spirits, related to or identical with the *bTsan* demons of the Tibetans, who imagine these supernatural beings as ferocious riders of red colour. The red thread-cross would be then the *bTsan mdos* (or *tsen deu* of the Lepchas), as used in rite no 3.

13. THE SHIDOOK KYOB CEREMONY

If it is assumed that a person's death was caused by the demon called Shidook Moong, the ceremony called Shidook Kyob has to be performed. As this rite has already been

[see cat. 116, p. 78. - ANALYSE]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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described,[42] we will only note here those details, which are of special interest to our subject. Again, a base is made of layers of earth and in the centre of the topmost square a black thread-cross is planted, while in the four corners four small images together with the same number of *yeu*, in white, yellow, green and red, are placed. Below, 13 other figures together with 13 black thread-crosses, 13 knives, 13 sickles and 13 bows and arrows are arranged. In front of this structure stands a pot with nine handles. Besides encountering here the number nine, which we already identified as the most important number of the Bonpos, we find here the number thirteen mentioned, which is also regarded as a ritual number of this ancient Tibetan faith. As for the name of the demon, to whom the ceremony is dedicated, it sounds very similar to the name of the so-called "foundation owners", the *Shidak* (*gZhi bdag*). They are a group of Tibetan supernatural beings who are supposed to dwell in the earth and when disturbed exercise an evil influence which might prove fatal to men.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that at the present stage, with the material available for comparison, it is impossible to state whether the Bön elements to be found incorporated in Lepcha religious ceremonies came from the original Bön religion, or whether they were introduced into them through the medium of the Red Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1 Spelled *Bos* in Tibetan. About the Bon religion see H. Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon Religion*, 1950, and the notes given by Prof. G. Tucci in his magnificent new work *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949. For a sketch of this ancient Tibetan faith see R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz: Die tibetische Bon Religion, Archiv fur Volkerkunde, Vol. II, Vienna 1947, pp. 28-68 (Bibliography).

2 The distribution and use of thread-crosses in various parts of the world were described by W. Foy: *Fadensterne und Fadenkreuze*, I. Ethnologica II Leipzig 1913,, and by G. Lindblom: *Thread-crosses* (*Fadenkreuze*), *particularly in South America and Africa*, Ethnos, Vol. V, nos 3-4, Stockholm 1940.

3 The main works consulted are:

Das S. Ch. : 'The Bon Religion', *JASB*, Calcutta 1881 (p.196)

Schlagintweit, E. : 'Le Bouddhisme au Tibet', *Annales du Musee Guimet, Paris* 1881 (Plate XXXVII)

113 WADDELL, L. A. : *Among the Himalayas*, London 1890 (Photograph on p. 387)
WADDELL, L. A. : 'Lamaism in Sikhim, in *Gazeteer of Sikhim*, Calcutta 1894 (pp. 365, 368, 371—373)
GRAHAM SANDBERG : : *Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan*. Calcutta 1894 (p. 196)
WADDELL, L. A. : *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*. London 1895 (pp. 484-488)
DAS, S. CH. : *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Calcutta 1902 (p. 676)
FRANCKE, A. H. : 'Kleine archaologische Ertrage einer Missionsreise nach Zangskar in Westtibet', Zeitschrift *Deutschen Morgenland Gesellschaft*, Leipzig 1906 (p. 646)
AHMAD SHAH : : *Pictures of Tibetan Life*. Benares 1906 (Plates 29 and 40)
GRUNWEDEL, A. : *Der Weg nach Sambhala*. Abh. d. Konigl. *Bayer*. Akademie d. Wissen philos—philol u. hist. Klasse, Bd. XXIX, Munchen 1915 (p. 94).
GRÜNWEDEL A. : *Die Sternschnuppen im Vaidurya dkar po*. Festschrift E. Seler, Stuttgart 1922 (Note 5)
FRANCKE, A. H. : *Tibetische Hochzeitslieder*, Hagen i. W. 1932 (III., appendix)
SPENCER CHAPMAN, F. : *Lhasa the Holy City*, London 1938 (Photograph facing p.8)
STEIN, R. : Trente-trois fiches de divination tibetaines. Harvard Journ. Asiatic Studies, Cambridge Mass. 1939 (pp. 318—321)
RIBBACH, : *Drogpa Namgyal*, Munchen 1940 (Photograph p. , 161)
LESSING, F. : *Yung-Ho Kung*, Stockholm 1942 (pp. 148-149)
HUMMEL, S. : Geheimnisse tibetischer Malereien. Forschungen zur Volkerdynamik Zentral-und Ostasiens, Heft 2. Leipzig 1949 (Ill., appendix)
JÄSCHKE, H. A. : *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*. London 1949 (p. 274)
TUCCI, G. : *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Rome 1949 (II, pp. 715, 740, note 33)

Numerous works describing the construction and the use of thread-crosses composed by various Tibetan authors; e.g. the religious compendium of the "Red Hats", in 63 volumes, briefly termed *Rin chhen gter mdzod* contains in the volume *Phi pa* the following treatises:

(1) *g Nas chhos dgongs gter las dbang phyug ma yi zor mdos khyer bde bar bkod pa bzhugs so*
(2) *gNam chhos mi bgyur rdo rjei dgongs gter dbang phyug zor mdos kyi bka gtad kthabs bzhugs so*
(3) *gLing b hi spyi mdos kyi zin bris ra ga a mdzad pa bzhugs so*
(4) *bDz gshegs yongs kbul las gLing bzhi spyi mdos bzhugs so*
(5) *gLing bzhi spyi mdos kyi las bgrigs*
(6) *Thugs sgrub yang snying kdus pa las/mkha bgro gling bzhi srid pai spyi mdos chh:n po zhes bya ba bzhugs so*
(7) *bDe gshegs yongs kdus las/ srid pa kbod snyoms kyi mdos bzhugs so*
(8) *gSang bdag dregs pa kdul byed las tshogs dam srii glud mdos zhes bya. ba ghugs so*

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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4 See e.g. the report given by Ribbach in Drogpa Namgyal. As also stated by A. H. Francke, thread-crosses play an important part in the New Year celebrations (*Lo gsar*) of Ladak.
5 See Lessing's *Yung-Ho Kung*, pp. 148-149
6 Waddell, *Lamaism*, pp. 484 and *Lamaism in Sikhim*, pp. 371-373
7 A list of names of 14 various thread-crosses is to be found in R. Stein's *Trente-trois fiches de divination tibetaines*, p. 318
8 About the *bTsan* see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II. pp. 718-720
9 About this ancient *Tibetan* god see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II. pp. 734-736, and Nebesky-Wojkowitz: 'Das tibetische Staatsorakel, *Archiv fur Volkerkunde*, Vol. III, Vienna 1948, pp. 136-155 (Bibliography).
10 See Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, note no 283
11 About the use of this important religious object see the comprehensive notes given by W. A. Unkrig in W. Filchner's *Kumbum Dschamba Ling*, Leipzig 1933, pp. 291-398
12 Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 740, note no 33, and Indo-Tibetica I, Rome 1932.
13 J. F. Rock: 'The Birth and Origin of 2Dto-1mba 3Shi-2lo', Bull, École Francaise d'Extreme Orient t. XXXVII, Hanoi 1937, Plate XXVI
14 J. F. Rock: 'Studies in 1Na-2Khi Literature, Bull. Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient t. XXXVII, Hanoi 1937, part II.
15 J. F. Rock: 'The Muan Bpo Ceremony,' *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. XIII, Peking 1948, p. 53, note no 102
16 See J. F. Rock: *The Ancient 1Na-2khi Kingdom of Southwest China*. Cambridge Mass., Vol. II, p. 389 and plate 389.—A *1Na-2k'wai* can be seen on Plate 229
17 The title of this MS is *Ju thig gi mo sgo phye bai dbang skor rgyas pa lags so*. It is now in possession of M. R. Stein (Paris)
18 Grünwedel, *Vaidurya dkar po*, note 5; Landblom, *Thread-crosses*, p. 94 and photograph on p. 93
19 See H. E. Kaufmann *Ethnologischer Anzeiger*, IV, (5), Stuttgart 1939, p. 235; Kaufmann: 'Kurze Ethnographie der nordlichen Sangtam-Naga, Assam, *Anthropos* 1939, p. 223; Kaufmann: 'Das Fadenkreuz in Hinterindien, *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XVI, no 15, Berlin 1939, pp. 193-195; and *Ethnologischer Anzeiger*, IV, (6), Stuttgart 1940, p. 329
20 About the Lepchas, their religion, customs, etc., see G. Gorer: *Himalayan Village*, London 1938 and J. Morris: *Living with Lepchas*, London 1938. It is interesting to note, that the Mun priests are divided according to the rites they practice—into "white" and "black" Mun, a division which corresponds to the "white" and "black" Bon
21 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 228—230; Morris, *Living with Lepchas*, pp. 152-162
22 This god who is mainly worshipped by the Buddhists of Sikhim, is depicted in Tibetan iconography as a king riding upon a white horse and holding a banner in his right hand, and a shallow bowl containing jewels in his left
23 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, Plate 16; Morris, *Living with Lepchas*, photograph facing p. 154
24 Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II. p. 725
25 Other numbers used by the Bonpos with preference are 7, 13, 18 and 360
26 In Tibet as well as among the Lepcha coloured thread is used not only for the construction of thread-crosses, but also applied when making various charms. Thus, for example, two sorts of Tibetan amulets, called *Srung skud* and *Srung khor* consists mostly of coloured thread
27 Tucci, *ibidem*, II. p. 718
28 Tucci, *ibidem*, II. p. 715
29 See the publication by S. Hummel, previously mentioned
30 Tucci, *ibidem*, II. p. 726

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E.J-5 (1937, 1950) 1951
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31 A number of local *bTsan* demons seems to be propitiated by the lamaists of Sikhim who regard them as spirits of diseased novices or ill natured lamas. Waddell (Lamaism in Sikhim, p. 356) mentions a demon, called *Zla ba srog gc*, as the *bTsan* of Pemiongchi, *Lha btsan po* as dwelling at Yangong Gompa, etc.

32 This magic square, the sections of which are represented in various colours, is frequently used in Tibetan astrology. According to the well known Tibetan astrological work *Vaidurya dkar po* (leaf 452 a), the following supernaturals are supposed to dwell in the different sections of the square:

On the first, white *sMe ba* dwells the Earth Goddess *Rab brtan ma*, the colour of her body is white and clear like a crystal, in her right hand she holds Mount Sumeru, lifting it up; with her left hand she grasps a vessel, filled with Amrta (nectar). She wears a robe with train, made of white silk. On her head she wears a diadem of gold.

On the second, black *sMe ba* dwells the King of the *bDud*, his body has a brilliant black colour, in his right hand he holds a *Khram shing*, in his left a snare; he wears a garment made of black silk. On his head he has a golden diadem.

On the third *sMe ba*, which is blue, dwells *Sa bsen gdug byed*, the colour of his body is sky-blue. In his right hand he holds a rosary made of skulls, in his left he holds the *tChag lchig* skull-cup. He wears a garment made of black silk.

On the fourth, green *sMe ba*, dwells *kLu rgyal lba ru*. Her body is of brilliant green (blue) colour. In her right she lifts a precious vessel. She wears a garment made of green (blue) silk.

On the fifth, yellow *sMe ba* dwells the King of the *Sa bdag, hjig rten bdag*. In his right hand he holds a precious vessel, with his left he lifts a white conch-shell. He wears a garment of golden silk, on his head he has a golden diadem.

On the sixth, white *sMe ba*, dwells the King *sKye bgrod dpal*. The colour of his body is a brilliant white. In his right hand he holds a club with a thunderbolt on top, in his left he carries the precious victory banner. He wears a garment of white silk.

On the seventh, red *sMe ba*, dwells the great red *bTsan*. The colour of his body is red, vermillion-like. In his right hand he holds a long lance, in his left the white-black die. He wears a garment of red silk, on his head a diadem of gold.

On the eighth, white *sMe ba*, dwells the *Lha chhen dbang phyug che*. The colour of his body is a brilliant white. In his right hand he holds the trident, in his left a skull-cup filled with blood. He wears a garment of white silk, on his head he carries a golden diadem.

On the ninethe, red *sMe ba*, dwells the *Ma mo Dus mun ti*, who is dark-red. In her right hand she holds a sack, filled with diseases, in her left a coil of thread. She wears a red garment and on her head she carries a golden diadem.

33 These piece of dough are called *chongbu tipku*; they are mostly waved over the invalid towards the end of the exorcism. They are used by lamas and Mun alike. The act of waving away the forces of evil is called *pek* by the Lepchas.

34 Butter is used in many ceremonies of the Tibetans and Lepchas; it serves also as material for making images, especially during the so-called "butter festival". Beautiful pictures (in colour) of such butter effigies, were published by J. F. Rock in his article 'Life among the lamas of Choni,' *The National Geographic Magazine*, Washington 1928, Plates I, V, IX, XIII, XV, XVI

35 The Tibetan *Sa bdag* or "earth owners" are a group of minor deities, which was taken over into Tibetan Buddhism from the Bon faith. They seem to correspond to the Sabdok moong of the Lepchas, who are believed to live

h [see CAT. 116, p. 76, - Analyst]

5:Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer E,J-5 (1937, 1950)1951
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in rocks and when disturbed by men can afflict skin diseases. The same is believed in Tibet.

36 Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, II, p. 722
37 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 475—478 and Plate no 31
38 Compare Tucci, *ibidem* II, p.
39 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, pp. 350—351
40 Morris, *Living with Lepchas*, photograph facing p. 130 and description pp. 128-133
41 For this and other information we are indebted to Mr. Nyima, former official of the Tibetan Government.
42 Gorer, *Himalayan Village*, p. 351